

I am a resident of the Houston, Texas metropolitan area and an XM Radio subscriber. I have lived in the Houston area for almost 15 years and have been a commuter most of that time. Because I find myself in my automobile nearly two hours a day, I attempt to make the most of that time by listening to informative and entertaining programming on the radio, audio books or compact discs.

A couple of years ago, when XM Radio first became available, I signed up without hesitation. Why? As a fairly conservative adult, I had become disgusted with the radio programming in this area. I still enjoy rock and roll and like to hear news and traffic reports, but found myself having to endure raunchy, locker room-quality on-air discussions to hear any music or traffic information. I was excited when I heard about the variety and the commercial-free/talk-free programming offered by XM, and I have been more than willing to spend hard-earned money for my monthly subscription and to add radios around my house and for each of our cars over the past couple of years.

Unfortunately, I found that I did still need to tune in to local radio stations to get traffic reports. To get them, I would have to endure annoying chatter, commercials, etc. and when the traffic report did come on, it often had little substance. Apparently the folks at XM Radio got wind of this, and in their pursuit of subscribers and improved programming, decided to offer continuous weather and traffic for large metropolitan areas, including Houston, Texas. Needless to say, I was thrilled! And of course, as is typical of XM, they didn't offer a low-quality traffic add-on to one of their other channels. Instead, they rolled out the most comprehensive traffic coverage to be had in the area, available continuously - twenty-four hours a day and on weekends and holidays. Just try getting a traffic report on ANY local radio station in Houston, Texas after 7 p.m. They simply are not available, despite the fact that all of the major roadway construction projects commence after hours in this town.

No sooner did I work this new service into my routine ? a service that I voluntarily pay for ? I learned that someone wanted to withhold it from me. The National Association of Broadcasters, through petition 04-160, is lobbying the Federal Communications Commission to restrict my access to this high-quality, innovative service. Why would they do this? The answer is simple - they cannot give away their programming and compete fairly with a paid service. I think that this simple fact speaks volumes. Please reject this attempt to force those of us who have chosen to pay for a superior service back to the local radio stations? inadequate offerings by holding our local traffic and weather hostage.